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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1966

INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 8105

RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0752

RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY 4336

RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 2854

BT

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 00014 COMBINED SECTION

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E.O. 12065: RDS-1, 02/02/02 (LEWIS, SAMUEL W.) OR-M

TAGS: PEPR, IS, US

SUBJECT: CUDEL PERCY -- CONVERSATION WITH LABOR PARTY  
- LEADER SHIMON PERES

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. SENATOR PERCY AND STAFF MEMBERS SANDERS, COHEN, AND BANNERMAN, AND MRS. SANDERS MET WITH LABOR PARTY LEADER SHIMON PERES FOR 90 MINUTES DECEMBER 28. CONTROL OFFICER SCOTT ATTENDED AS NOTE TAKER. SUBJECTS DISCUSSED INCLUDED THE JORDANIAN OPTION AND THE PEACE PROCESS, THE GULAN LAW, FUTURE "SURPRISES," THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP, AND ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

3. SENATOR PERCY ZACN XD  
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TOR: 040802Z JAN 82

REACTION UC PEVUS' EVZA FIRST ARTICLE. PERES ANSWERED THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T LIKE IT. IT MIGHT ESTABLISH PRECEDENTS THAT COULD NOT BE PUT INTO EFFECT ON THE WEST BANK. NONETHELESS, THE PRESSURE IS ON TO DO SOMETHING TO KEEP CAMP DAVID ALIVE AFTER APRIL 1982. THE EGYPTIANS LIKE THE IDEA. THERE MIGHT BE TACIT SUPPORT IN SOME ARAB COUNTRIES. WITH SAUDI ARABIA THERE IS THE COMPLICATING FACTOR OF THE OLD SAUDI-SADAT FEUD. THEY MIGHT SUPPORT IT IF IT WAS SEEN AS A STEP FORWARD ON THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM.

4. SENATOR PERCY ASKED WHICH ARAB COUNTRY SHOULD NEXT ENTER THE PEACE PROCESS. PERES ANSWERED SAUDI ARABIA. IN FACT, HE SAID, THE U.S., ISRAEL, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA NEED TO ESTABLISH COORDINATION. WE HAVE MUCH TO OFFER ONE ANOTHER. BUT, HE SAID, JORDAN IS THE KEY. SOME SORT OF JORDANIAN CONFEDERATION IS ESSENTIAL. THE PLO IS A MENACE; HUSSEIN CAN CONTROL THEM. THE ONLY REAL OPTIONS ARE THE PLO AND JORDAN. THE PLO WON'T NEGOTIATE. THEY HAVE REACHED THE POINT WHERE THEIR EXISTENCE OUTWEIGHS THEIR GOALS.

5. CONCERNING AUTONOMY, PERES SAID, THE PROBLEM IS THE FINAL OUTCOME. EGYPT SEES A STATE; BEGIN SEES PERMANENT AUTONOMY. EGYPT PROBABLY GIVES TOO MUCH WEIGHT TO THE CAPABILITY OF WEST BANK ARAB ORGANIZATIONS. THE MAYORS ARE UNDER THE GUNS OF THE PLO. EVEN IF "FREE" OF ISRAEL, THEY WOULD NOT BE FREE. IN ADDITION, ISRAEL AND EGYPT ARE WIDE APART ON THE ISSUES. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE U.S. SHOULD APPOINT A SPECIAL NEGOTIATOR.

6. SENATOR PERCY ASKED PERES HOW HE FELT THE EGYPTIANS SAID THE GULAN LAW. PERES ANSWERED THEY PROBABLY HAD MIXED FEELINGS. ON THE ONE HAND, ANY EMBARRASSMENT FOR ASSAD WAS A GOOD THING. THE SYRIANS ARE A CONSTANT THREAT TO PEACE. THE METHOD OF EMBARRASSING ASSAD IN THIS CASE MADE THEM UNHAPPY. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE TIMING THEY HAD TO SWALLOW IT.

7. SENATOR PERCY ASKED PERES IF HE HAD HAD ANY INKLINGS

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PAGE 003

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THAT BEGIN WOULD TAKE STEPS TO EXTEND ISRAELI LAW TO THE GULAN. PERES ANSWERED THAT HE HAD ASKED BEGIN WHAT HE WOULD DO ABOUT GEULA COHEN'S GULAN BILL, AND HE HAD SAID HE WOULD VOTE AGAINST IT. PERES DISCOUNTED THE POSSIBILITY OF A WEST BANK LAW, SAYING IT WOULD KILL CAMP DAVID. THE SENATOR ASKED PERES IF HE SAW ANY SURPRISES COMING IN LEBANON, PARTICULARLY AFTER JANUARY 5.

8. PERES BEGAN BY NOTING THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT IS UNPREDICTABLE; ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN. ON BALANCE, THOUGH, IF THERE WAS NO SYRIAN OR PLU PROVOCATION, "WE MAY REACH A QUIET MAY." IT IS IN ASSAD'S INTEREST TO KEEP THINGS QUIET.

9. SENATOR PERCY ASKED PERES HOW HE SAW THE CHANCES FOR ELECTIONS IN 1982. PERES ANSWERED THAT PRIME MINISTER BEGIN HAS 61 PEOPLE HE MUST KEEP HAPPY. "IT IS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK." PERES THEN ASKED THE SENATOR HOW HE ASSESSED THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP AT PRESENT.

10. SENATOR PERCY OBSERVED THAT IT WAS AT ITS LOWEST EBB SINCE 1956. HE EXPRESSED HIS DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE TREND, ESPECIALLY IF THERE IS ANOTHER SURPRISE. THE PRESIDENT WAS SURPRISED, DISAPPOINTED AND LET DOWN BY THE EVENTS OF THE PAST SIX MONTHS, THE SENATOR SAID. SURPRISES HAVE GREATLY COMPLICATED THE PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. SENATOR PERCY EXPRESSED

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HIS CONCERN ABOUT ATTITUDES IN AMERICA. WE NEED TO REVERSE THIS TREND.

11. PERES AGREED, NOTING THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO REACH POLITICAL AS WELL AS STRATEGIC UNDERSTANDING.

12. THIS MESSAGE CLEARED WITH CODEL PERCY'S PARTY.  
LEWIS

END OF MESSAGE

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